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# The Influence of the Sunflower Movement on the Civic Movement in Taiwan

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## Abstract

The paper aims to discuss the reasons, and the dynamics of the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan. The Author looks for answers to the questions why the students occupied the Legislative Yuan, why their actions got so many people's support as well as what reasons can explain these developments and what kind of impact such actions would bring about, particularly the impact on the citizens' movement.

**Keywords:** Sunflower Movement, the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement, Legislative Yuan, Taiwan

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## Preface

On March 17, when the Internal Affairs Committee at the Legislative Yuan reviewed the case of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA), legislator Jang Ching-jung utilised the conflict between the government and the people, announced within 30 seconds' disarray with a hidden wireless microphone to "have a session and send the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) to the Executive Yuan conference for file to reference. Then he "adjourned the session", that caused an uproar. In the evening on March 18, civic groups held a night party for defending democracy and protesting against the slapdash review procedure of the CSSTA. Lin Fei-fan, Chen Wei-ting and other students took advantage of the unprepared police and at about half past nine rushed into the Legislative Yuan and occupied the Parliament. Spread over the Internet, many students heard the news and immediately arrived at the Legislative Yuan for support. Students occupied the Legislative Yuan for a total of 24 days and retreated on April 10, after the President of the Legislative Yuan's had promised "the law-making before review".

During the process, which had made everyone shocked, students were dissatisfied with the President and the President of the Executive Yuan did not accept the request of returning back the CSSTA, so a group of students occupied the Executive Yuan. Finally, the National Police Agency, the Ministry of the Interior got an instruction of forced eviction, so that the riot police with shields and batons carried away the students and used water cannons to expel the other people. With the use of both batons and water cannons the police drove out the people, and the Executive Yuan returned to work the following morning. Although there were different views on the occupation of the Executive Yuan, but for the expelled students and the public, it was a shocking and unforgettable lesson. The word “state violence” which was once a term heard in the book became reality. On March 30, under the students’ call, about 50,000 people not mobilized by the political parties assembled in front of the Katagalan Boulevard. In the past, the large-scale events joined by more than 50,000 people were mainly mobilized by political parties, but this Katagalan Boulevard gathering was not mobilized by the political parties. Furthermore, from the moment the representative of the students, Chen Wei-ting, had announced the expansion of protest on March 27 to rally there were just three days, but on that day the supporters flew in from all sides. The main demands of that very day action were: vetting the law before its enactment, supervising cross-strait legalization, civil constitutional conference and hope that the legislators from the ruling and opposition parties would return to the Congress, standing with the people and supporting appeals of the people. The people who were present there had eyes filled with tears and some of them even wiped away their tears, affected by the atmosphere that everyone was the host of the country. Eventually, the president of the Legislative Yuan came forward and promised that “Before the Cross-Strait Agreement Supervision Regulations legislation draft was not completed, there would not be held the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement consultative conference between the related parties”.

Students could occupy that place for so many days, because of others’ support and help. After the Sunflower Student Movement formally retreated, according to the Liberty Times poll, 69.9% of people believed that the student movement had had a positive impact on Taiwan’s long-term development of democracy, while there were up to 82.96% of respondents who expressed their dissatisfaction with President Ma Ying-jeou’s dealing with the Sunflower Student Movement. Only 10.64% of people expressed their satisfaction [Li Shin-fang, 2014]. Another survey made by “the Apple Daily” pointed out that 69.8% of people agreed with students’ proposal of legislation of the Cross-Strait Agreement Supervision Regulations first, and then negotiations on the Service Trade Agreement [Chen Liang-yu, 2014]. “Business Today Taiwan Indicators Survey Research company conducted the index poll on

the CSSTA, showing that 53.6% of respondents did not support the signing of the service trade agreement with the Mainland, while 23.3% of respondents supported it. With regard to the students' occupation of the Legislative Yuan, 64.9% of them agreed, 26.5% disagreed and 8.6% were undecided [TISR, 2014]. The vast majority of people (83.9%) thought that the explanation of the government to the people was not enough. According to the survey made by the TVBS poll center, 63% of respondents thought that the signed Service Trade Agreement should be removed, only 18% of people thought it should not be and 19% of people had no opinion. As for the measures the police took to expel the people from of the Executive Yuan, 35% of people agreed, 56% of people disagreed and 9% had no opinion [TVBS, 2014]. No matter whether the poll made by the media supported the KMT Party or the DDP Party is subject to analysis, it showed that people did not support the signing of the Service Trade Agreement with the Mainland, and they recognized the students' way of occupying the Legislative Yuan.

This paper aims to discuss why the students occupied the Legislative Yuan, why their actions got so many people's support as well as what reasons can explain this development. It also aims to answer the question what kind of impact such actions would bring about, particularly the impact on the citizens' movement.

## Theory of Social Movements

Many theories have attempted to explain why people participate in social movements. Ted Gurr thought that the primary psychological state of people's participating in social movements or political violence and revolution is a relative deprivation. It means that members of the society feel the gap between value expectation and reality [Gurr, 1970]. In other words, the source of a relative deprivation is the gap between expectations and reality. Davies pointed out that when the gap is intolerable, a revolution arises. For the same reason, the mental frustration is the main cause of action. The link between the frustration-aggression sufficiently explained the motivation of behavior [Davies, 1962, pp. 5–19; Davies, 1969, pp. 547–576]. The unequal division of land, income inequality and dissatisfaction are all based on the same logic. These frustrations and dissatisfactions have aroused by comparison to some groups of the society but relative deprivation is a rational comparison and a psychological feeling. The theory was particularly popular in 1960 and 1970.

The resource mobilization theory emphasizes that there is an inequality in any society, accumulating enough grievances which at any time can trigger social movements. However, the disadvantaged groups that have most grievances usually have

limited resources or organizational capacity, and therefore, the injection of external resources or forces is an important factor of the motivation of the disadvantaged groups in order to initiate the opposition movement and challenge the government. In contrast to the relative deprivation, they do not think that the movement supporters' "psychological discontent" is a determining factor which causes movement, because the dissatisfaction exists at all times. The oppressed cannot usually protect their own interests and a lack of implementation right. They need external resources, the elite's support and operation, in order to mobilize [McCarthy, Zald, 1976, pp. 1212–1241]. Therefore, the resources mobilization theory emphasizes the importance of external resources and the elite. The so-called resources may include the involvement of money, interest groups, mass media, intellectuals, professionals, and so on. The resource mobilization theory emphasizes the mobilization and organization of social movement resources. They believe that at any time, there is enough dissatisfaction in the society which can initiate a grassroots movement. As long as the social movement can be organized because of the injection of external resources, "resentment and dissatisfaction can arise over the movement organization and the leaders' definition, creation and manipulation [McCarthy, Zald, 1976, pp. 12–15].

The gap between the expectations and reality of the relative deprivation emphasizes social and psychological factors, but what extent of personal frustration and imbalance may cause collective action and then the outbreak of social movements? The documents of relative deprivation have not described subjective circumstances and cognition [Gurney, Tierney, 1982, pp. 33–47]. The resource mobilization theory emphasizes structural factors, acknowledging the feasibility of the raised collected resources and personal status in the social network, and also emphasizing that rational participation in a social movement has nothing to do with social and psychological factors [Klandermans, 1984, pp. 583–600]. The consensus mobilization theory is an attempt to reconcile the relative deprivation theory and the resource mobilization theory. Klandermans has pointed out that having the feeling of relative deprivation will not necessary cause some actions to be taken. There should be an awareness that this target is helpful to eliminate relative deprivation. The anticipation in the social movement by a person in his cognition state is a mental process of weighing the interests of pros and cons [Klandermans, 1984]. This theory emphasizes that the relative deprivation should be transferred to cognition that collective interests can help eliminate relative deprivation, so as to generate the social movement. Such cognition is not generated automatically, consensus mobilization is needed. That is, through movements and promotion to clarify why collective interests may bring a relative deprivation relief. Agreeing with the goal of the movement does not necessarily lead to participation, because the person might wonder if involvement can help him or

her to achieve the goal. Collective interests may push one to participate in the social movements, if he or she expects that others will also participate.

Another theory that attempts to explain the social movement is the political opportunity structure theory, i.e. the political opportunity formal institutional structure and informal power relations in a particular country. Such a political environment will create or restrict the opportunities of social movements and the power of the involved government. As for the political opportunity structure, there are different arguments among scholars. McAdam pointed out that there are four indicators commonly accepted by scholars [McAdam, 1996, pp. 23–40]. First, a relatively open or a closed extent of the institutionalized political system. Second, the stability of a political elite system. Third, the presence or absence of political allies. Fourth, the state repression ability and characteristic. When a political system is completely closed, the social movement is difficult to start, when fully opened, social organizations will transform more in the direction of institutionalization, such as interest groups or political parties. The social movement will reveal a recession phenomenon. Secondly, the division of the ruling elite improves the chance of success of the social movement. Furthermore, the social movement needs allies and resources. The linkage of political allies is helpful. The state repression ability and characteristics are closely related to the system of the government.

## Why Did They Get Involved?

Outside the Legislative Yuan there was a considerable support from people every day, and there was a high degree of mobilization effect on March 30. There were so many people coming out in such a short time showing a lot of grievance and discontent with the government which had been accumulated in the society. Then why were those people dissatisfied?

I have held interviews with 12 participants who are scholars and students. Plus the reports of all the parties, those who were involved in the movement can be divided into several parts<sup>1</sup>:

1. Anti-China: China's economic rise and military expansion causes concerns of other countries. With Ma Ying-jeou government's pro-China policy, many Taiwanese are worried about China which may try to reach unification with Taiwan through the economy. These people's stance was in favour of Taiwan's independence, such

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents A2, A4, A6 had a similar view. A person with number A is on behalf of scholars and experts, with number B is on behalf of students.

as the Alliance of Referendum for Taiwan, Radical Wings, etc. Generally, they oppose any service trade agreement.

2. Generational justice/distribution justice issue: represented mainly by the Left (People's Democratic Front). Some students' groups think that new poverty problems caused by globalization of trade under the neo-liberal doctrine should be reconsidered.
3. Taiwan's democracy defend: another group of people are dissatisfied with the whole democratic procedure, objecting to the government's handling of the service trade process behind closed doors. Especially Jang Ching-jung's thirty seconds did not only violate the previous agreement between the government and the people, but it also violated democratic procedures.

Since the second alternation of the ruling parties, President Ma has designed a pro-China policy on cross-strait relations. Many people worry that the dependence on China may result in losing the autonomy by Taiwan. Secondly, many people are worried that the China or pro-China capital power may attempt to erode Taiwan's democracy, using a variety of ways. For example, when Want Want Holdings Limited was incorporated by China Times Group, it also applied for the acquisition of the CNS system platform, which triggered protests against Want Want China Times Group and the media monopoly. People's worries were not without any reason. After Ma administration had taken office, Taiwan's press freedom was seriously sent backwards, ranking from the world's 32 position to 47 last year. Because of Beijing's growing exerted influence over Hong Kong's media, its press freedom dropped from "freedom" in 2011 to "partly free", and in 2014 it dropped to 83 from 74 of the previous year<sup>2</sup>. In social and economic terms, people are worried that the Chinese companies with their huge financial advantage may destroy local enterprises. The opening of service trade to the Chinese technical personnel to Taiwan will threat Taiwan's labour market [Tseng Po-wen, 2015]. In terms of life, they are worrying about adulterated food from China which may affect people's health.

The cross-strait relations, the circulation of people, the expanding economy and trade, of which President Ma is proud, have not brought benefits to people. Lin Tzung-hung and others [2011] pointed out directly in the book "The Collapse of Generations" that the cross-strait trade has had negative impact on Taiwan's gap between the rich and the poor [Lin Tzung-hung et al., 2011, p. 12]. In comparison to China, Taiwan has a great financial capital and superior technology, but there levis a lack of land and labour. On the contrary, China has got a relatively low-wage labour but it has got a vast territory. The expansion of economic and trade exchange

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<sup>2</sup> China's press freedom in 2014 ranked the world's 183.



has helped large Taiwanese consortia with their own capital and technology to make a profit, but the medium-sized and small enterprises, farmers as well as workers of the middle and lower class have suffered. The industrial transfer resulted in an increase in unemployment and poverty, widening the gap between the rich and the poor.

The manufacturing industry transfer has caused the weakening of the trade unions organization; capital transfer and the weakening of labour unions resulted in the stagnation of the Taiwanese employees' salaries. According to the Council of Labour Affairs' survey, the average salary of college graduates in 2012 was only 381 NT more than the previous year. Compared with 14 years ago, there is an increase of 938 NT, but the rate of increase is less than 4%, and the commodity price rose by 15%. The freshmen graduated in 2012 had an average starting salary of 26,722 NT, 740 NT less than 14 year ago. The postgraduates' average salary is about 31,639 NT, compared to the previous year's 32,321 NT, there is 682 NT less. The junior college students' situation was most serious, they had 1,052 NT less [LT, 2013]. With a "retrogressing" salary, commodity prices and housing prices being on rise, the young people have had a very hard time.

Closely related to this, the Ma government followed the American neo-liberalism, reducing taxes to boost the economy. First, the inheritance tax was significantly reduced from former 40% to 10%. Then in the case of fiscal deficit, three brackets (tax grades) of the consolidated income tax rate 6%, 13% and 21% were cut down to 1 percentage for each one. The income tax of the rich was dramatically reduced, while business income tax was reduced from 25% to 17%, the tax rate of commercial banks was reduced from 5% to 2%. The reason for the tax reduction was the bolstering of the economy. When an economy is boosted, the revenue will increase. However, does it mean that the increasing revenue can bring everyone a better life?

The former director of the Department of Health Yang Jr-liang gave a very clear answer in the book *"Saving Taiwan Through Allocation"* [Yang Jr-liang, 2014]. He said that the government simply fought for a more vibrant economy, but although the revenue had increased, there was no rational allocation. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening, creating the crux of Taiwan's current social problems, and as a result the average salary went back to the same level it stood at 15 or 16 years ago. That is why Taiwan's economic growth rate reached 8% in 2010, which is viewed as President Ma Ying-jeou's economic achievement, but in return he has also got "people's boos".

Yang Jr-liang thought that Taiwan's economic development had followed the American neo-liberalism doctrine which is in favour of the rich by imposing a tax reduction for the rich, depreciating the labour value and lowering the wages and benefits of the earners. So that the society which formerly had been more even in terms of wealth allocation, went towards that enlarged gap between the rich and the poor.



The money after tax reduction and the wage reduction levelled off, but this might not suffice to stimulate economic growth. It is tantamount to rob the poor for the rich, so the gap between the rich and the poor is getting larger [Yang Jr-liang, 2014].

The consortium generally advocate tax reduction and lower wages, so as to attract the Taiwanese businessmen to come back. The tax reduction resulted in the income tax accounting for 23% of the total revenue in 1990, but rose to 47% in 2008, wherein the ratio of the salary tax continued to increase. The property tax (land and house taxes, an inheritance tax and a gift tax) of which the main target was to reduce the number of the rich from 27% in 1992 to 12.5% in 2009 [Lin Tzung-hung et al., 2011, p. 22].

The declaration against the under-the-table service trade action revealed the uneasiness of young people toward Taiwan's future. They worried that the cross-strait union between Taiwan's consortium and Mainland's consortium will lead to beyond control consequences. The following is a part of the Declaration's content:

"...Opposing the service trade doesn't mean opposing everything which is Chinese". The biggest problem of the service trade is that liberalization brings benefits just for big capital. Huge consortia can make an unlimited, cross-strait expansion. These cross-sea consortium will harm Taiwan's small domestic business. Those small and medium-sized business paradise which we were once proud of will be taken over in the future by cross-sea capital groups. The nature of the service trade agreement is similar to the WTO, FTA, TPP. These economic agreements among the countries are entered into in order to remove a given country's protection of the people. The service trade agreement is regardless of the unification or the independence, regardless of the blue or green political parties. This is the class problem in which few large capital groups take possession of peasant labourers, as well as the harsh survival problem which Taiwan's youth will face." [BINYF, 2014].

"If you worry about your future, there are many issues to resolve. You can study abroad, study hard and make good money, so I think their anxiety is not about their future, instead the anxiety is about their common future in Taiwan"<sup>3</sup>.

But to what extent will the awareness of relative deprivation become a motive to take personal action? Secondly, how many people must be there or what percentage of the people must experience relative deprivation, so that the social movement will arise? Scholars of the relative deprivation theory generally ignore this problem [Gurney, Tierney, 1982]. In addition, some people think that the social movement itself may also be instrumental for creating the feeling of relative deprivation. It is possible that the structural inequality has already existed, but the cognition of relative deprivation generated after the social movement emerged. Since the Chen Yun-lin

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<sup>3</sup> Respondent A6.

incident in 2008 caused by the Wild Strawberries Movement, the Anti-media Monopoly Movement, Chang Yao-fang in the Dapu event and the “10,000 people said farewell to Hung Chung-chiu” on August 3, 2013, has the social mood of the people been accumulated? In particular, there was an influx of more than 25, 000 people joining the event, “10,000 people in white shirts said farewell to Hung Chung-chiu” which was initiated by the Citizen 1985 Action Alliance [AD, 2013].

According to the telephone poll interviews held by Taiwan’s Election and Democratization Study (TEDS), asking the respondents if they agree with the view that “the rich in our society are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer”, most of the respondents strongly agreed with that argument, as showed in Table 1. In particular, in the poll conducted before the Sunflower Movement at the end of September, 2013, up to 74.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that the rich are getting richer, while the poor are getting poorer, plus the people who partially agreed, made up the total of 90.8%. Those who did not agree and strongly disagreed were in total of 7.2%. Another 44% of respondents expressed that it was the government’s responsibility to decrease the gap between the rich and the poor. The view of inequality had already existed. Why did the Sunflower Movement burst out on March 18, 2014? The relative deprivation theory does not provide a clear explanation.

**Table 1. Public Perception of Inequality**

Date	Someone said: “In our society, the rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?			
	Very much agree	A little agree	Partially disagree	Totally disagree
2013/3/20–3/24	71.8% (790)	16.8% (185)	6.2% (68)	3.4% (37)
2013/9/26–9/30	74.9% (805)	15.9% (171)	4.9% (53)	2.3% (25)
2014/6/6–6/10	68.0% (732)	18.7% (201)	7.9% (85)	3.0% (32)
2014/9/25–9/30	70.9% (770)	15.8% (172)	7.3% (79)	3.2% (35)

Resource: Taiwan’s Election and Democratization Study (TEDS).

**Table 2. Are You Satisfied with President Ma’s Disposition on Cross-strait relations?  
(in %)**

Satisfaction degree \ Time of inquiry	December 2011	December 2013	March 2014
Very satisfied	20.0	4.9	4.5
A little satisfied	33.4	20.6	19.7
Partially dissatisfied	16.1	25.4	29.2
Totally dissatisfied	13.7	32.8	30.9

Resource: Taiwan’s Election and Democratization Study (TEDS).

Also according to the TEDS' inquiry, the telephone poll conducted in 2012 before the presidential election, there were 20.0% of respondents who were very satisfied with President Ma's disposition on the cross-strait relations, 33.4% of respondents were a little satisfied, partially dissatisfied made up 16.1%, and totally dissatisfied constituted 13.7%. In total, there were 53.4% of respondents who were satisfied, more than a half. But two years later, in an inquiry made in December, 2013, those who were very satisfied and partially satisfied were in total of 25.5%, and in March, 2014 before the Sunflower Movement there were 24.2% (see Table 2). The meaning presented in the Table 2 results is obvious. At first, people had an expectation of the cross-strait exchanges, while the result of the exchanges just brought a small number of consortia profit, and people gained benefits from that. Besides, people began to feel anxious that the government was too much in favour of China. That is why their satisfaction degree of Ma government's disposing the cross-strait relations was falling.

The source of mobilization emphasizes structural factors, the feasibility of resource raising, the personal status in the social network and it also emphasizes rational participation in the social movement, regardless of the social psychology factors. They think that the collective action is political and rational and cannot be reduced to a psychological state of the individual. These students began organizing it with few resources. Their occupation of the Legislative Yuan made "actors" feel that there was hope we could change and make a breakthrough, then they joined the action, and the money came in<sup>4</sup>. McAdam compared it to the black people's protests when some time after that, foundations, charity and donations were set up, he found out that the elite's support always emerges after the protest mobilization. And that is not the main reason for bringing about protests [McAdam, 1982, pp. 122–124]. During the Sunflower Movement, the rising power could be seen. To avoid the government's monopoly of foreign media relations, on March 24, 11 Internet users launched the "joint purchase front page advertisement" activity on a crowdfunding website FlyingV, raising funds to purchase advertising in New York Times, Apply Daily and the Liberty Times. With the title "Why are they here?" and the photo of the students sitting still, as well as the police on duty at the Legislative Yuan, to express their stance against the under-the table service trade agreement. 1.5 million NT was raised during 35 minutes, achieving the goal of purchasing a half of the front page in the domestic newspaper. There were 3,495 Internet users participating, who, within 3 hours, raised more than 6.7 million NT, which allowed the students' movement purchase a half

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<sup>4</sup> Some respondents indicated that the former gathering actions had attracted more people to join the activity, but the response was not enthusiastic, not even the March 18 student movement. The occupation of the Legislative Yuan ignited everyone's hopes.

of the front page advertisement in *Apply Daily*, *Liberty Times* on March 25, and the whole front page in *New York Times* on March 30 [LT, 2014a]. In addition, modern technology allows individuals who do not know each other to mobilize quickly over the Internet, not having to rely on traditional mobilization, so that mobilization costs drop significantly<sup>5</sup>. As mentioned above, the traditional resource mobilization theory cannot explain the mobilization way through new media.

Many scholars thought that the dispute between Ma Ying-jeou and Wang Jin-pyng in September provided the Sunflower Movement with a political opportunity structure. He Ming-hsiu emphasized that the split within the KMT challenges the political space. From the occupation of the Legislative Yuan to the students' movement final retreat, due to the fight between Ma and Wang, a new open political opportunity has been created [He Ming-hsiu, 2015]. The dispute of Ma and Wang may be the main reason that Wang Jin-pyng for the first time did not use the iron fist to expel students from the Legislative Yuan. Meanwhile, President Ma used Article 44 of the Constitution "Inter Institutional Coordination Right" to call the presidents of the Legislative Yuan to solve the occupation problem. Wang Jin-pyng did not attend, but made a statement that Article 44 of the Constitution is a provision that the president uses for the inter institution dispute settlement, which has a different nature from the disputes in the Legislative Yuan. It is the dispute between the ruling party and the party not in power in the Legislative Yuan about the service trade agreement, so it is inconvenient for him to attend the inter institutional consultation called by President Ma [Peng Hsien-chun, Wang Yu-chung, 2014]. This statement forced Wang Jin-pyng to make a commitment "not to call related parliamentary party groups consultative conference for the CSSTA, before the draft legislation of the cross-strait agreement supervision was completed" [Chuang Li-tsun, Chiang Yu-chan, 2014].

Perhaps the political opportunity structure theory can explain why Wang Jin-pyng did not use the police power, so that students and other people had the opportunity to continue occupation of the Legislative Yuan. But he did not explain why the service trade agreement had been signed on June 21, 2013, while the occupation of the Legislative Yuan happened in March the following year. After the signing of the agreement, there have been a number of organizations continuing their protest. Lawyer Lai Chung-chiang called the civil bodies to set up the Democratic Front against the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement on July 29, 2013. Participants were composed of the students of the National Taiwan University, National Cheng-chi University, University Tsinghua, Soochow University, National Taiwan Normal University, Fu Jen University and other schools. They participated in the public

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<sup>5</sup> Respondent A1.

hearings, lobbied the legislators, and even convinced the opposition to boycott, but with no effect. The hearing was criticized as being too formal by the Democratic Front against the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement, the Black Island Nation Youth Front, the lawyer Lai Chung-chiang, Professor Cheng Hsiu-ling, etc [Fang Chia-min, 2014]. Legislator Chang Ching-chung organized 8 public hearings within a week, three in the morning, afternoon, and in the evening. They were proceeded with an attitude of the government order propaganda, without real communication. After 16 public hearings, the opinion of civic groups and opposing scholars did not get an official response, and the supporting measures of the government were not therefore changed, forcing them to take more radical methods<sup>6</sup>.

At 10:00 on March 17, the Black Island Nation Youth Front, Alliance of Referendum for Taiwan, Taiwan Association of University Professors, Taipei Society, in total 53 NGO mass organizations launched “120 hours for defending democracy” action, demanding the KMT to implement the Legislature supervision mechanism, examining substantially the CSSTA [Coolloud, 2014]. Originally planned for up to 120 hours of protest became a blasting fuse to strengthen the protest action, because of the legislator Chang Ching-chung’s 30 seconds move in the afternoon, 17<sup>th</sup> [Tsai Hui-chen, 2014]. Before March 18, the anti- service trade agreement students have repeatedly tried to break into the Legislative Yuan, but were obstructed by the police. On March 18, they really captured the parliamentary chamber, not expecting that the move would attract the vast number of solidarity, so that instead of trying to take them out, the police faced the strong counter encircling crowd.

The aforementioned consensus mobilization theory emphasizes that participating in the social movement is regarded as a rational choice made by a person in his cognitive state, which is a mental process of weighing the interests of the pros and cons. The theory emphasizes that the transfer of people from relative deprivation to collective interests can help eliminate that cognition of relative deprivation which does not generate automatically and consensus mobilization is needed. This is the idea of collective interests which will bring the relief of relative deprivation through the movement and promotion. To make people accept the interpretation of “certain social status which is unjust”, someone must get people’s sympathetic response. No unilateral organization’s advocacy can be completed [Wang Fu-chang, 1996, p. 139]. Agreeing with the goal of the movement will not necessarily lead to participation. A person might wonder if his participation will help him achieve the goal, and therefore may decide not to participate. Collective interests can help to bring about a person’s participating in social movement, of course if someone expects that others

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<sup>6</sup> Respondent A4.

will participate. Secondly, if the “emergent events” that coincide with the organization’s ideological mobilization will emerge in time, it is also an important factor which has an impact on consensus mobilization.

From the Wild Strawberries Movement, the anti-Media Monopoly Movement, the workers of the closed down factory event, Dapu Event, the Anti 4<sup>th</sup> Nuclear Power Plant Movement, the Hung Chung-chiu event, etc. Taiwan’s society has accumulated a lot of opposing force. Each time the mobilization gets more people’s sympathetic response. Combined with Chang Ching-chung’s behavior, it became a fuse of “the emergent event” that appeared over time, awakening in everyone the above mentioned dissatisfaction and relative deprivation. But even so, in the evening of March 18, there were just several hundred protesting people, because most of them might have thought that the possibility of success was unlikely. The diversionary tactics of the student groups led the police to focus on the Legislature entrance and the side door at the Jinan Road. Another group of about 40 students climbed over the wall of the Legislature side door at the Qingtao East Road, rushing directly into the Parliamentary chamber. It was a surprise that the Parliament chamber was in that way occupied. Then, using mobile telephones, Line and Facebook, people from all sides got mobilized. The crowd gathered outside the Legislative Yuan was getting bigger and bigger, successfully occupying the Parliament chamber. All kinds of formal and informal networks as well as communication channels became very important mobilization tools. Line, Facebook, and other social media networks were very important tools for the rapid mobilization in it [Klandermans, 2013, pp. 251–253]. When students successfully occupied the Parliamentary chamber, the case that had been considered impossible in the past, became possible overnight, so soon the potential supporters were called out. The more people participated, the more participants became relatively safe. Furthermore, through the network groups and a brief summary, they would soon be able to understand something about the issues, particularly the arrangement of summary helped them quickly understand the sequence of events, then they could participate in the movement. This is also an important factor of consensus mobilization. This kind of thing continues to strengthen and cuts action costs<sup>7</sup>.

In the process of consensus mobilization, the social activists should also be ready to face a set of rationalized explanations given by the authorities, and they usually have the advantage of the mainstream media control. In the March 18 Citizens Movement and the ongoing confrontation, the government also attempted to launch a wave of offensive news from the mainstream media, hoping to change the direction of the public opinion. However, once that news appeared, soon there were academic

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<sup>7</sup> Respondent A6.



scholars spontaneously analyzing it from the theoretical standpoint, drawing on the international examples or from different angles (or flaws found by the Internet users), the public opinion would quickly change the viewpoint. These scholars, scattered at universities and research institutes, did not belong to any organizations or political parties, but they predominated in terms of wits [Huang Ming-chung, 2015]. In order to avoid the mainstream media's unfair reports, the students occupied the Legislative Yuan at the scene using iPad connecting to Ustream platform and broadcast the situation in the Legislature, addressing those issues which had not been reported by the mainstream television and broadcast media. On March 18 at 5:00, Ustream hit a record of 70,000 people online viewing it simultaneously, and the total number of viewers reached nearly 1 million [Trinity, 2014], and Japan's leading video sharing website NICONICO also joined the line of broadcast. On March 21 the total number of people watching the Legislature live on NICONICO also accumulated up to million viewers [LT, 2015b]. Additionally, many students used YouTube and Facebook as their direct broadcast platforms, providing the latest live pictures inside and outside the Legislature to the public who was unable to be there [LT, 2015a]. g0v.tw hackath, which concerned the concept of the open government sent people to the Legislative Yuan to ensure the Internet situation, and also through Hackfoldr developed by itself to put in order the Internet-related archives, so that the scattered online documents and brief summaries can have a unified interface as to find quickly the information wanted [Chen Jui-lin, 2014]. In other words, the government had no advantage concerning discussions and comments.

Among those thousands of the called out people, there were anti-China, more leftist young people who were concerned about the distributive justice issues or inter-generational justice. Another group were the anti-under-the-table service trade democracy defenders. The anti-China group basically is not in favor of entering into any service trade agreement. The withdrawal from the service trade agreement would be their only option. Those who defend Taiwan's democracy did not necessarily oppose signing the service trade agreement. They might have supported the service trade agreement but were against the Kuomintang's not meeting the democratic process standards. When the movement put forward demands, the common factors most people can agree to should be considered. The movement put forward demands and most people could agree to the common factors, accepting that they should be considered. In the process, many viewpoints were discussed constantly, including what kind of relations in the end we would like to keep with China? Finally, as we can see from "the law-making before inspection" claim, there was no strong position taken against signing the agreement with China when facing the relations with China, but they claimed to comply with legal procedures, so the Legislature and the people can



conduct supervision. Just as Sun Chiung-li commented, this movement was drawn into “the anti-black box”, a merely formal procedural requirement, a big gap from the “democratic” imagination in the discussion [Sun Chiung-li, 2014]. For many people, it may be a loss, but in different concept demands, for some groups which would not have been cooperative in the past, only procedural claim can provide a consensus platform for activists with different ideas [Tseng Po-wen, 2015]. In the whole process, discussions about the inter-generation justice and the global trade in the neo-liberalism doctrine will have a lot of impact on the industry, which has not been clearly dealt with and presented. In the process, the students discussed the Cross-Strait Agreement Supervision Regulations Draft, but there were people who immediately asked why somebody had used an expression “the cross-strait” instead of “two countries”. Because Taiwan is an independent country, people understood that if the debate continued, it would be endless and with no solution, so finally as mentioned “legislation before revision”<sup>8</sup>.

Another proposed slogan was “the Civil Constitutional Conference”. There are issues, such as the under-the-table service trade agreement, inefficiency of the Congress, legislators’ neglect of duty, the president’s power without responsibility, as well as the distributive justice issues, which even through referendum and recall, become great obstacles to a system. The March 18 student movement was an outlet of a collective expression of emotions. This is why we can see then that in addition to the anti-service trade and the cross-strait supervision regulations, there is also another “Civil Constitutional Conference” slogan, having been the subject to constitutional level issues<sup>9</sup>.

## The Sunflower Movement and the Rise of Citizen Awareness

The Sunflower Movement’s most direct impact was on the cross-strait relations. Not only was the service trade agreement still stuck in the Legislative Yuan, delaying the advance of the cross-strait political negotiation, but the people also began to have a comprehensive review of Ma government’s cross-strait policy [TPN, 2014]. Therefore the cross-strait relations can be said to have fallen from the cloud to the gorge. Before the outbreak of the Sunflower Movement, there was a message that spread that Ma Ying-jeou and Xi Jinping might meet during the APEC meeting in late 2014, but

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<sup>8</sup> Respondent B1.

<sup>9</sup> Respondent B3.

this possibility was destroyed by students' occupation of the Legislature overnight. Its effect even spread to Hong Kong. But this article does not concentrate on it.

The article will keep focus on the Sunflower Movement's impact on the democratic development in Taiwan, especially on the Civil Movement. The official statement opposing the Sunflower Movement, such as King Pu-tsung's criticizing the students occupation of the parliamentary chamber, emphasized that the democratic rule of law does not allow anyone to use violent means to occupy the parliamentary chamber. In a democratic society ruled by the law, like the United States, this kind of behaviour is not tolerated [Chen Yu-jen, 2014]. DPP's victory in the nine-in-one elections, the political commentator Chen Wen-chien thought was the victory of the Sunflower, but she also criticized that its victory would lead the country to "vicious steps, democracy beyond redemption" [LT, 2014b].

The American immigrant academics of the Academia Sinica Yu Ying-shih published (by the professor Liu Jing-I) the article "Taiwan's citizen protest and democratic future" supporting the students' action. He said "this time the protest is a movement defending and improving Taiwan's democratic system, which is of equal importance to the government and the people. Although through the movement people could strengthen their civil rights, the government may also raise its quality of democracy, because of "listening to the voice of the people". It is an unalterable reality that democracy is "at home" in Taiwan..." [Lin Chao-i, 2014]. Professor Tseng Kuo-Hsiang thought that "the students who appeared in the Legislative Yuan, the Executive Yuan and a campus autonomous student strike, are shaping three democratic values for the Taiwan society: the civil rights of the constitutional democracy, people's sovereignty for radical democracy and a common good for a community of deliberative democracy" [Tseng Kuo-Hsiang, 2014]. The Sunflower Movement supporters thought that this movement evoked the awareness of civic consciousness, having a positive and profound impact on Taiwan's democracy development. More and more young people began to realize that even if they did not care about politics, politics would still influence them, so it needs to transform the civic force into the real political participation, as to change the status of Taiwan.

The Sunflower Movement in 2014 brought about the constitutional reform that had kept silent for almost 10 years and the congressional reform had a chance to be debated. People began to wonder whether the representative democracy failed or not, and if the political system had enough accountability and responsiveness. Secondly, the interaction of cross-strait relations and agreements must be taken with people's participation and supervision.

After the Sunflower Movement, they wanted to "turn defense into attack and go out for sowing" just as Chen Wei-ting said. They planned a tour around the country

to go deeper into the local society and deepen the “anti-service trade agreement” movement and “cross-strait agreement supervision legalization” movement [AD, 2014], with speeches, rallies, the grassroots forum, the Internet citizen’s movements and the parliamentary supervision. In addition, the statement also showed that there will be continuously more forums and citizen deliberations held in the country to continue the promotion of the stand for “civic constitutional conference”. Then, various organizations emerged, including the Democracy Tautin, Taiwan March, the Association of Parent Participating Education I Taiwan, Formoshock, Restoration of Taiwan Social Justice, Social Democratic Party, New Power Party. The citizen deliberation and civic constitutional actions were taken successively in the country.

The concern of the public issues was caused by the service trade issue, and also by the democratic deliberation activities during the protest. During the Sunflower Movement, a lot of students and people participated outside the Legislative Yuan. In the beginning, there were democracy classrooms and various speeches. Later, there were professors who began to put forward deliberative democracy, spurring discussion groups. Several days of lectures, with the messages passed individually, but through the discussion in a democratic deliberation mode, the students and the people present there could express their views and also listen to a variety of different voices. The public was tantamount to retrieve their direct political participation rights. The students and the people conducted democratic deliberations in the streets, discussing the issues such as the impact of service trade on different industries, the fourth Nuclear Power Plant, cross-strait affairs agreement supervision regulations and other public issues, forming a unique street deliberation mode of Taiwan, also known as “deliberative democracy on street”. Street deliberation created the space for the voice of the citizens and a pluralistic dialogue of the society, allowing this movement to get improved to a speculative level.

The citizens’ deliberation in the streets was officially launched on March 26, and lasted till April 5, during 10 days there were thirteen sessions held, there were set up about 200 groups, which mobilized more than 400 moderators and staff of the panel. Through the Internet there were recruited more than 300 volunteers as moderators of the panel. The actual number of discussion participants was nearly 4,000, while the observers outside the panel were countless [Shih Sheng-wen, 2014].

“From the response of the participants, it was of course a success as an activity. While as a movement, it was not involved entirely in the discussion. The greater part is from the partners who were willing to act and implement it, as well as the democratic seeds bred from the positive handling and response in the street practice” [Shih Sheng-wen, 2014].

Deliberative democracy emphasizes informed participation, therefore there should be information prepared for the people participating in every discussion. Before a formal discussion the two sides representing of the pros and cons should be invited to express different positions, as the basis for the public discussion. In this vibrant and noisy environment, the street created the space for rational discussion. The participants were not only students, but also old men, or even mothers with kids talking together<sup>10</sup>.

“The street democratic deliberation as a social practice, did find the possibility of a classroom or street overturn. It touched a new possibility on the ether scale, mobilization, organization or efficiency, and it might be the most likely action for future discussion of the public issues to enter into the daily life of citizens” [Shih Sheng-wen, 2014].

The subsequent effects of the ten days’ citizen deliberation were beyond former expectations. Hundreds of participants expressed their willingness to continue, beyond and after the movement, their accumulative experience and implementation of the public discussion on the movement stage, sowing the democratic seeds in the civil society and in the community. The results of all the D Street citizen deliberation discussions were put on the Internet for people to browse [Dstreet, 2014b]. Then, on April 27, hundreds of people in the Ketagalan Boulevard discussed the fourth nuclear power plant and the nuclear issue in Dstreet “citizen deliberation” ways. A total of 30 groups were there. Thereby the deliberation, “modifying an existing referendum law and holding a referendum” was recognized by the majority of the people. At the same time, the participants thought that the future major issues should enjoy a better democratic vote through the modified referendum law. The Japanese medium “Asahi Shinbun” that was concerned about the Sunflower Movement pointed out that although the students’ demands did not get the government’s guarantee, but they walked out of the Legislative Yuan, spread everywhere to conduct the movement, “establishing new heights of the Taiwan citizen movement”, “even forming the forces which cannot be underestimated by the political parties” [Chang Mao-sen, 2014].

Pushing forward the street democratic deliberation is crucial for the deepening of Taiwan’s democracy. The students and people returned to their communities, united the civic groups around important public issues, pushed forward the public discussion into practice, assisted people everywhere to fully discuss important public issues, built consensus and thus influenced the decision-making direction. The respondent who played important roles in assisting the street deliberation said:

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<sup>10</sup> Respondent A7.

"I think Taiwanese themselves were more amazing. It was almost an activity organized by a civil society, without any special promotions, but a lot more people participated there than in the past... It was the concern about public issues, and then the participation. It's something I felt very deeply, which could be divided into breadth and depth. Including a previous push of deliberative democracy that was not thought to be so important, now because of the March 18 event, people gradually felt that it had been important. Or we can say that before, I would not see the owners of fast food restaurants, B&B managers, cram school teachers and other people from different trades and professions starting to join the discussion on relevant public issues, whether it being a civil organization, public hearings, forum or workshop. I have seen those differences. In addition, there are more and more young people. I used to feel amazed when I saw high school students to attend, and I would applaud them. Now, after I finished introducing senior high school students, there have appeared junior high school students. So for me, what is wonderful is not the political position of the people in the inner circle, but those people from outside would also like to find a political outlet and without them there would not be a third force. And I would say that this one quite moved me, and it was not limited to Taipei. We have been to Changhua, Taoyuan, Hualien, Taitung, including farmers from Luyeh who would come out. Due to the whole atmosphere of the larger community, they were willing to stand out being concerned about the large-scale public issues..."<sup>11</sup>.

**Table 3. The Statistics of Group Discussion in the Dstreet Citizen Deliberation During the March 18 Movement**

Date	Issue	Site	Number of groups
3/26	Establishing cross-strait agreements supervision regulation	Ching Tao East Road	18
3/27	Service trade and youth employment	Ching Tao East Road	18
3/28	Service trade and national security	Ching Tao East Road	11
		Chi Nan Road	10
3/29	Service trade and democracy	Ching Tao East Road	22
3/31	Service trade and financial industry	Ching Tao East Road	11
4/1	Service trade and medical industry	Chi Nan Road	15
4/2	Service trade and weak enterprise	Ching Tao East Road	16
4/3	Service trade and social service	Ching Tao East Road	20
4/4	Service trade and the telecommunications industry	Chi Nan Road	Record unclear
4/5	People's assembly, race regulations	Ching Tao East Road	20
		In the Parliamentary chamber	10
		Chi Nan Road	21
Total			192

Source: Dstreet [2014b].

<sup>11</sup> Respondent B3.

**Table 4. The Citizen Deliberation on the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant Before the Ketagalan Boulevard on April 27**

Date	Issue	Site	Number of groups
4/27	Citizen deliberation on the fourth nuclear power plant	Ketagalan Boulevard – first district	10
		Ketagala Boulevard – second district	5
		Ketagalan Boulevard – third district	11
		Ketagalan Boulevard – fourth district	4

Source: Dstreet [2014b].

The students and the people in the street conducted a debate on the relations between the Cross-Straits Affairs Agreement Supervision Regulation, service trade and democracy, service trade and youth employment, service trade and national security, service trade and finance, healthcare, vulnerable groups and telecommunications. On March 26, in the Chingtao Road, there were 18 groups that conducted a debate on the Cross-Straits Affairs Agreement Supervision Regulation. Some 200 citizens participated and experienced nearly two and half hours of brainstorming (see Table 3). The launched discussion was based on “the Cross-Straits Agreement Conclusion Regulation” proposed by Taiwan Democracy Watch and Democratic Front against the Cross-Straits Trade in Services Agreement and countersigned by 40 professors. At that time, the discussion was divided into four parts: the first part was about why the cross-strait official exchanges had to be supervised. The second part was about what kinds of democratic participation and supervision mechanism were needed when signing the cross-strait agreement. The third was about the question if there were some problems in the civil version of the cross-strait supervision articles. The fourth part was the following: “If you agreed with this regulation, what would you think you can do to accelerate its issuing?. If you disagreed with the establishment of this regulation, would you think we should have a proper supervision mode and how to supervise?” [Dstreet, 2014a]. Many groups thought that the Cross-Straits Agreement Supervision Regulation was necessary. If the representative democracy failed, supervision mechanism should not solely rely on the Congress.

Under public pressure, the Executive Yuan’s version of “Taiwan and Mainland China setting up an agreement disposal and supervision regulation draft” was sent to the Legislative Yuan on April 3. There were in total 25 articles in this version. In response to the Executive Yuan’s version, on April 5, the students and people began to compare the civil version and the Executive Yuan’s version. This debate flaunted, “people’s assembly, relay race of review”. There were 20 groups in Chingtao East Road, 21 groups in Chinan Road, as well as 10 groups in the parliament chamber, a total of 51 groups held discussions. The summary report of each group were recorded

carefully. Finally, the summary reports of 51 groups were summed up to some common opinion, forming “the people’s assembly submission”. From the Cross-Strait Agreement Supervision Regulation and the people’s assembly deliberation summed up six claims, including the following: the citizens should have the opportunity to participate in the cross-strait agreement disposal and supervision. If necessary, they can participate in making decisions by a direct, democratic way of referendum. Information should be open and transparent. The content of the cross-strait agreement should safeguard national security, democracy and freedom, cultural identity, the environment and ecology, distributive justice and other human rights values. The assessment of the cross-strait agreement’s impact must be comprehensive, and should be included in a private independent assessment. The Congress must have substantive rights of inspection and supervision of the cross-strait agreement. The proceeding of the cross-strait agreement should be based on the principles of peer negotiations and sovereignty protection.

The issue how far the legislative supervision and people’s supervision force should reach, as well as if they infringe on the executive power, there is naturally a lot of discussion and debate. However, people could not agree to the Executive Yuan’s draft version emphasizing the power-driven concept, only asking the government to “explain and communicate”, as well as to sign the government-led “national security inspection mechanism”. It could not be agreed whether or not the content of the agreement involved the change of law, deliberating the way of executive order.

Then on April 7, legislator Chen Chi-mai organized a public hearing on the legalization of the supervision mechanism at the Internal Administration Committee. The Mainland Affairs Council, the Executive Yuan was also invited to submit its reports. On April 8 in the afternoon, the legislator You Mei-nu’s office organized a civil version of public hearing of the Cross-Strait Agreement Establishment Regulation Draft. Later, because of the nine-in-one election, the discussion on the draft was in quiescence. However, at the first anniversary of the Sunflower Movement, the Economic Democracy Union<sup>12</sup> and other non-governmental organizations organized

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<sup>12</sup> The Economic Democracy Union, EDU was originally the Democratic Front against the Cross-Strait Trade in Service Agreement”. After renamed, the Economic Democracy union sustainably criticized economic policies like: service trade, good trade and Taiwan Free Economic Pilot Zones, concerning the legislation of “the cross-strait agreement concluding treaty” and “treaty concluding law”. The Economic Democracy Union is a confederation composed of 37 Taiwan civic groups, its members including the Cross-Strait Agreement Watch, Taiwan Democracy Watch, Taipei Society, Taiwan Association of University Professors, Taiwan Association for Human Rights, Two Covenants Watch, Taiwan Labour Front, Taiwan Rural Front, Awakening Foundation, The Black Island Nation Youth Front, Democracy Taotin, Taiwan March, Citizen 1985, Citizen Congress Watch, Citizen of the Earth Foundation, Green Citizen’s Action Alliance, Taiwan Environmental Information Association, Kaohsiung City Confederation of Trade Union, Kaohsiung Federation of Labor Union, The First Year of Culture Foundation Preparatory office,



“the people returning to the Legislature” movement, putting forward three demands, including “the supervision of a regulation that should be reliable”, “the constitutional reform should be launched” and “goods in trade negotiation should be stopped, the service trade should not be passed in secret” [Tseng Wei-chen, Wang Wen-hsuan, 2015]. As for the eight versions of “the Cross-Strait Agreement Supervision Regulation Draft”<sup>13</sup> deliberated in the Legislative Yuan, the Economic Democracy union invited people to ask questions online, selecting a supported version. In addition, on March 12 in the evening, the debate on comparing different versions on Chinan Road outside the Legislative Yuan was conducted and broadcast live on the Internet. Among the legislators who made proposals that evening, six appeared personally, gave an explanation and participated in the debate of the versions. The Executive Yuan did not send representatives to attend. They said it had broadcast online on March 18, there was no need to participate [You Tube, 2015]. The Economic Democracy Union made ten multiple-choice questions out of the eight versions for the Internet users to choose, in accordance with the position of both sides, the timing of people’s participation, the scope of human rights protection, information publicity, the participation in the parliamentary supervision in advance, the participation in the consultations in the parliamentary supervision, the participation in the parliamentary supervision ex post, the relationship between the parliamentary supervision in advance and the parliamentary supervision ex post, the scope of the impact on assessment, the mechanism of referendum and other projects<sup>14</sup>.

In addition to the citizens’ participation in the Cross-Strait Agreement Supervision Regulation Draft, there was also another group of people that thought that the representative system failures should be changed fundamentally, including the Constitutional Amendment, the reform of the electoral system and the parliament seats problems. This was also related to the four requirements proposed by the students in the parliament chamber during the movement on March 23, one of which is

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The League for People with Disabilities, R.O.C., Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly, NHI Civic Surveillance Alliance, Taiwan Alliance for Advancement of Youth Rights and Welfare, Alliance for the right of Cooperative Education Student Participants, The Garden of Hope Foundation, Taiwan Social Welfare League, Taiwan Alliance to End Death Penalty, National Association for the promotion of Community Universities, Tainan Community University Research and Development Institute, The Association of Parent Participating Education in Taiwan, Humanistic Education Foundation, Constitutional Citizen Group, Taiwan Forever, Taiwan Society North, Taiwan Watch Institute, Judicial Reform Foundation.

<sup>13</sup> Eight versions including: the Executive Yuan version, Chiang Chi-chen version, *Taiwan and Mainland China setting agreement dealing with regulation draft*, You Mei-nu version (civic version), *Cross-strait agreement concluded regulation draft*, Cheng Li-chun version, *Taiwan and China signing regulation and agreement disposal draft*, Li Ying-yuen version, *Cross-strait agreement supervision regulation draft*, and DPP version, Taiwan Solidarity Union version, Yao Wen-chih version, *Taiwan and China agreement disposal concluded regulation draft*.

<sup>14</sup> Website: [quiz.musou.tw/CrossStraitAgreement](http://quiz.musou.tw/CrossStraitAgreement).

“calling a civil constitutional conference to cope with the current constitutional crisis”. On 24, Taiwan Democracy Watch immediately held a press conference stating that “the rebirth of democracy is required, supporting the calling of citizens constitutional conference” as a response. On April 6, the movement groups held a thousands of citizens forum named “the citizens constitutional conference” in Chinan Road. The main topics discussed among the thousands of citizens forum were: Why should we hold the citizens’ constitutional conference?; Which issues and principles should be included in the content of the citizens’ constitutional conference?; the discussion form of the citizens’ constitutional conference, the composition of participation as well as how to participate, etc. On April 8, there was a press conference held after all the discussions were put in order, issuing “the preliminary conception, goal and vision of the occupying movement in the Legislative Yuan to the “citizens’ constitutional conference”. It mainly hoped to form by grassroots forces a conference outside the system, reaching consensus which has a binding force to the political departments to amend the constitution and law of ‘at large-scale’, as well as to accelerate the constitutional reform within the system. The topics discussed included the constitutional system, the electoral and party system, the foundation of the cross-strait relations law, social justice and human protection, economic policy and inter-generational justice [CNA, 2014]. After several months of plan and preparation, “the Civil Movement for Constitutional Reform” was finally officially established on 10 November, 2014, launching a series of activities resulting from the grassroots forum<sup>15</sup>. After the establishment of the union, it commenced the training of grassroots forum presiding in all places, including Ilan, Hualien, Taitung, Taipei, Taichung, Tainan, Kaohsiung, etc. Then, the grassroots forum started, gathering opinions from all sides. The ultimate goal is to hold a national citizens’ constitutional conference, reaching the consensus between the constitutional and law amendment. On 21 March, 2015, in the afternoon, after the anniversary of the Sunflower Movement, the Civil Movement for Constitutional Reform returned to the Legislative Yuan, holding a street grassroots forum, hoping that the citizens who had participated in the debate would discuss in which direction Taiwan’s electoral system should go. Under various civil pressures, legislators made a number of law amendment versions, but the non-governmental organizations had begun to worry that the Civil Movement for Constitutional reform went bottom-up too slowly. Some groups worried that the draft proposed by the Legislative Yuan, the

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<sup>15</sup> “Civil Movement for Constitutional Reform” is composed of more than 20 groups, such as Green Citizens’ Action Alliance, Taiwan Democracy Watch, Economic Democracy Union, Taiwan Alliance for Advancement of Yourth Rights and Welfare, Taiwan Association of University Professors, Millet Foundation, Taiwan Association for Human Rights, Covenants and Conventions Watch. Website: <http://www.new-tw.org/>

political parties or political figures did not meet the expectations of everyone. Then it was passed unexpectedly, therefore they hoped that the groups' elite could propose their own version. On 18 March, 2015, the Civil Movement for Constitutional Reform composed of more than 40 civic groups was formally established, publicly soliciting a constitutional reform version.

The constitutional amendment issue is more complicated than the Cross-Strait Agreement Supervision Regulation Draft, including the national system, whether or not to maintain the five-right pattern, the electoral system, the citizens' age of right to participate in politics, the basic human rights of citizens, the amendment and implementation of the constitution. There might be an endless debate on the national system without reaching any consensus. After Chu Li-lung took office as the KMT Party chairman, he threw the idea of a cabinet system. There are many scholars who took great interest in the cabinet system, considering that the cabinet system could better match power and responsibility. The one who cannot do well must just step down, not waiting till the end of tenure [Tseng Yen-ching, Chiu I-sung, 2014]. However, some scholars thought that when our presidential elections were changed into a direct election by the people, a high wall which changes the constitutional system, the changing direction would be set, so there might be a great restriction to go toward the cabinet system [Su Tzu-chiao, 2010]. To move towards the cabinet system, the president might be a nominal head of state, since it is nominal, there will be no need for direct elections. But the TISR poll (Taiwan Indicators Survey Research) conducted on December 22–24, 2014 showed that only 9.4% of people agreed to cancel direct presidential elections. Of course, some scholars have pointed out that the cabinet system could still allow for direct presidential elections, which is not often the case in many countries. It may happen when the national identity issue is clarified and there are no powerful enemy forces surrounding the country from outside. Moving towards the presidential system, the constitution needs to be largely amended, because the original constitution inclines to the so-called modified cabinet system. If it remains a semi-presidential system, with slight modifications, such as: the president of the Executive Yuan nominated by the president, it should get the consent of the Legislative Yuan, the president has the right to dissolve the parliament, and so on. As for "the president of the Executive Yuan nominated by the president should get the consent of the Legislative Yuan", it was supported by an overwhelming majority of the people, up to 71.5%. But the constitutional law experts who studied in France, Hsu You-wei and Hao Pei-chih [Hsu You-wei, Hao Pei-chih, 2015] expressed their opposition, writing an article "Why did the French semi-presidential system abandon the premier's consent right?". According to the same TISR poll (Taiwan Indicators Survey Research) designed to get the people's answer to the question what kind of

system our current central government system belongs to, the answer is as follows: 31.8% – presidential system, 17.7% – cabinet system, 13.9% – semi-presidential system, 36.6% – expressed no clear position. This questionnaire survey showed that the civil awareness of the political system is weak. There is still a lack of consensus among the government and the people as to what kind of system they should move towards. Even talking about the cabinet system, there is still a variety of options, such as the British Westminster model, the Netherlands and Belgium's consensus type, in addition to an Italian, Israeli or German model.

Another item related to the constitutional amendment is the electoral system reform. Social groups are not satisfied with the two major parties' political monopoly, but the current electoral system is considered to be unfavorable to the small parties' development. The Single-District Two-Votes System is a mixed system of the majority system and a proportional representation of political parties. In the regional elections adopting a single district in the majority system, a large party can easily get more seats. On the basis of the nationwide proportion, the proportional representation listed by political parties was adopted. Theoretically speaking, this electoral system has no disadvantages to smaller parties. However, due to the threshold of 5% of the party vote, and only 34 seats allocated in the proportional representation voting, it is relatively disadvantageous to smaller parties. Currently Taiwan Solidarity Union and People First Party are unable to obtain seats in the districts, but they have won seats after exceeding the 5% threshold. However, the number of legislators was halved and only 113 seats were left. If there is no increase in the seats in the nationwide range, the discussion about the threshold is of no use and even if the threshold is completely abolished, the political parties also need to get close to 3% of votes to have a chance for one seat.

The election reform union has proposed three reform demands: changing parallel voting into a mixed member proportional representation, increasing the proportional representation seats, so that the ratio of single-district voting and proportional representation voting will be 1:1, the threshold of proportional representation will drop from 5% to 1%. The current constitutional amendments bills of the Legislative Yuan election system, which have been sent to the Legislative Yuan including the proposal put forward by Lu KMT's Hsiao-chang are the following: to maintain parallel voting, to increase proportional representation from 34 seats to 64 seats, to reduce the threshold of proportional representation to 3%. While DPP's Li Ying-yuen has proposed a mixed member proportional representation, with the seats allocated to proportional representation to have increased to 77, but the threshold for smaller parties would still be maintained at 5%.

On March 21, 2015 in the afternoon, Civil Movement for Constitutional Reform held a street constitutional grassroots forum before the Legislative Yuan in Chinan

crossroads, addressing the issue of “the Parliament election reform: is democracy pluralistic or majoritarian?” Although the number of the participants was not as expected, but the discussion on the stage was very enthusiastic. The suggestions which enjoyed a high degree of consensus in the whole forum were: to change the parallel voting system into a mixed member proportional representation, on the premise of creasing the total seats, to increase the seats of the proportional representation ratio to 1:1, to revise the downward election deposit of official elections at all levels, considering the factors like a mixed member proportional representation, parallel voting, population and counties, as to reconsider the division of constituencies (the third article of the amendment to the constitution). There is more consensus to lower the age of political participation from 20 to 18. Now in the Legislative Yuan, both blue and green parties have proposed a draft to amend article 130 of the constitution to lower the age of the citizens’ political participation.

After the grassroots form was held everywhere, this civil movement held a convention on the action plan for the constitutional reform in the Chunhsien Building of the Legislative Yuan. After the discussion by all the parties involving political party leaders, legislators, civil groups, grassroots forum participants, the meeting reached a high degree of consensus on the two-stage completion of a comprehensive constitutional reform [Chen yu-Hsuan, 2015]. The first stage will place higher priority on lowering the threshold for revising the constitution, lowering the threshold of the voting age, lowering the legislators of proportional representation to 3%, expanding human rights protection and strengthening the human rights protection mechanism. The second stage of the constitutional amendment places priority on the central government’s institutional issues such as the presidential system and the cabinet system. However, in this session at the Legislative Yuan, there were no proposals of the constitutional amendment passed before an adjournment, because two parties could not reach the final consensus. However, Civil Movement for Constitutional Reform stated that they would continue to make an effort, not giving up.

During the year following the Sunflower Movement, discussions on constitution and electoral system were no longer limited to scholars and experts. The ordinary person could go on talking in the form of a street debate. For most people, those are no longer remote things. As a whole, we can see a trend to expand people’s involvement, including lowering the voting age, letting young people to speak out, lowering the threshold of proportional representation and increasing pluralistic participation of the political parties. Lowering the threshold of the constitutional amendment and referendum was even mentioned. Young people hope that through greater participation they will improve their situation. They realized that the effort might fail this time, because of the political parties’ calculations. The recall attempt failed,

but at least it set a precedent for a recall vote. As a result of the effort of a group of young people, they broke the high threshold of proposal and cosigned a recall vote, forcing the Central Election Commission to conduct a recall vote. In addition, there were some groups, such as “Taiwan March” making an effort to lower the threshold of the referendum law<sup>16</sup>. Recently more than two hundred high school students have joined the anti-black box curricula actions, to some extent they were also the apparent effects of the Sunflower Movement rooted in the civil society. This effect will appear in more places, including local debates on various public issues. “Save our own country (future)” has become the slogan of the youth, the awakening of civic awareness cannot be ignored by the future government in their policy design.

## Conclusion

The Sunflower Student Movement was an extraordinary event. When the students rushed into the parliament chamber, the civil groups that were waiting outside rarely assigned tasks to help the students in the chamber. While under the call of modern technology, such as cell phones, Facebook, Line, etc., students from all over the country came to offer support. Since Chen Yun-lin’s visit to Taiwan, there were more and more protests, but the energy accumulated in the March 18 event was beyond everyone’s imagination. This article attempted to analyze why the March 18 social movement attracted so many people willing to participate, and it further analyzed its impact on Taiwan’s civil society and the constitutional movement.

This article has been cut into a variety of social movements theories to discuss, including the sense of relative deprivation, resource mobilization, the political opportunity structure and the theory on consensus mobilization. The relative deprivation cannot explain exactly under what conditions the relative deprivation of individuals can be converted into collective action, and resource mobilization cannot explain the low cost and the fast Internet mobilization. Although the political opportunity structure can explain why President of the Legislative Yuan Wang Chin-ping did not use the police power and finally promised the students that no negotiation would be conducted before a piece of legislation is passed, but it cannot explain why so many people stepped forward to support the students. In the explanation of the theory on consensus mobilization, it can be found that the past several ongoing struggles were an ongoing convincing process. Those who have a sense of relative

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of the Interior held a special public hearing about the Election and Recall Act amending on April 22.



deprivation do not necessarily participate in it, until they believe that the collective participation can relieve their sense of relative deprivation, and expect that others will participate. There is no need to pay a high price. The finally proposed slogan is intended to address the content of the procedure, rather than substantial content. It is also the result of mutual persuasion and a compromise.

A year after the Sunflower Movement, many people began to examine its success or failure. As to the cross-strait agreement supervision regulation, the ruling and opposition parties have not reached a consensus, yet. It is still waiting at the Legislative Yuan. Since no "legislation" has been passed, there are naturally no articles examination of the service trade agreement. In this case, this movement did not reach its goal. But the Sunflower Student Movement called out a group of people, putting an enormous effort, successfully arousing civic awareness. A series of the citizens' deliberation activities and constitutional amendment activities that happened later were the result of the Sunflower Movement. Professor Yang Tsui said: "This is a symbolic success." In particular, "the youth have changed", which is worth encouraging and appreciating [Lung Pin-han, 2014].

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